image
318
DIGITAL EDITION
SPAWN
TODD MCFARLANE
CARLO BARBERI
THE KING IS COMING
MCFARLANE +fco

WORLD RECORD BREAKING COMIC!

SPAWN

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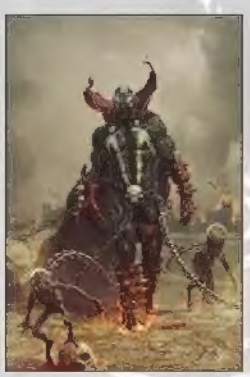

PREVIOUSLY IN *SPAWN*

Previously: Cult of Omega – Omega has been defeated and dragged down into his own prison by the Plague. But what awaits him at the bottom may be even worse... Spawn and his recent adversary, Medieval Spawn escape the island together but how long will this truce last?

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With his options limited, Spawn had to make a choice: stand and fight or retreat. As much as his warrior blood wanted to stay...
...the island they were battling on had become too unstable.
Though it meant leaving behind two fallen allies, in Monolith and Overt-Kill, Spawn knew he'd have to regain some of his strength back if he was to ever return there again.
Plus, he needs time to access what just happened three Hellspawns--the Omega, Medieval and Plague versions--appeared on that island but their auras were never captured in his computer analysis.
Something, or someone is desperately trying to hide something. Something deadly.
For now, a trip through the darkness will buy him the time. Enough for him to find answers to some of his questions.

EVENTUALLY, THEY SPILL FROM THE SHADOWS LANDING BACK AT SPAWN'S HIDDEN SANCTUARY.
WHAT IS THIS PLACE? IS IT SAFE?
THAT DEPENDS.
WHY'D YOU COME TO THAT ISLAND IN THE FIRST PLACE?
ARE YOU BLIND? I CAME TO HELP!
I DIDN'T ASK FOR ANY.
SAPPED OF POWER, SPAWN FIGHTS TO KEEP HIS BALANCE. TRAVELING IN THE DARK WITH SUCH A LARGE PASSENGER HAS TAKEN AN ADDED TOLL.
YOU NEED REST. WE CAN SORT THIS OUT LATER.
NO!
WE'LL TALK NOW! I'M NOT TURNING MY BACK ON YOU, NOT UNTIL I GET SOME ANSWERS.
THIS IS WHY YOU'LL NEVER WIN. NOT UNTIL YOU LEARN TO TRUST OTHERS.
LIKE YOU? WHY, BECAUSE YOU JOINED MY SIDE FOR A FEW MINUTES? YOU KNOW HOW MANY ENEMIES HAVE PRETENDED TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO MY WAR?

SYMPA-THETIC..? OMEGA WAS ABOUT TO KILL YOU.
WHY'S THAT ANY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU TRIED AGAINST ME?*
I'VE NO MEMORY OF THAT.
HOW CONVENIENT.
YOU WERE BEING RECKLESS. AND SINCE MOST OF US ARE HERE BECAUSE OF YOUR ACTIONS, I THOUGHT IT WISE TO KEEP YOU ALIVE UNTIL YOU COULD HELP GET US BACK TO WHERE WE CAME FROM.
*Issue 305 – Todd
ELSEWHERE IN THE COMPLEX...
THESE NEW READINGS DON'T MAKE SENSE, SOME KEEP SHIFTING EVERY TIME ANOTHER EARTHQUAKE REGISTERS. LIKE THEY'RE USING THE QUAKES TO MASK THEIR MOVEMENTS.
MAYBE MARC WILL BE ABLE TO...
BANG
MARC!
THAT YOU? I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR...
SHE-SPAWN IS STOPPED IN HER TRACKS AS SHE BARGES IN ON A SIGHT SHE CAN'T COMPUTE.
TRY IT! YOU'RE TOO WEAK TO STOP ME.

BACK THE F*CK AWAY FROM HIM!
NOW!
A FEMALE?
I DIDN'T THINK HELL WOULD EVER CHOOSE THEIR KIND.
I'M ABOUT TO GET REALLY PISSED OFF! AND YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN 'MY KIND' GET ANGRY?
YOUR WEAPON, IT CAN'T HURT ME.
MAYBE. BUT I BET YOUR ARMOR ISN'T COVERING YOUR NUTSACK. SO...YOUR MOVE!
YOU WANT TO TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON HERE, SPAWN?
I WILL, BUT NOT NOW. WHERE'S MARC?
HE'S GONE. I CAN'T FIND HIM ANYWHERE, THOUGHT HE WAS WITH YOU.
HE HAS TO BE HERE. HE CAN'T "SHADOW TRAVEL" WITHOUT ONE OF US.

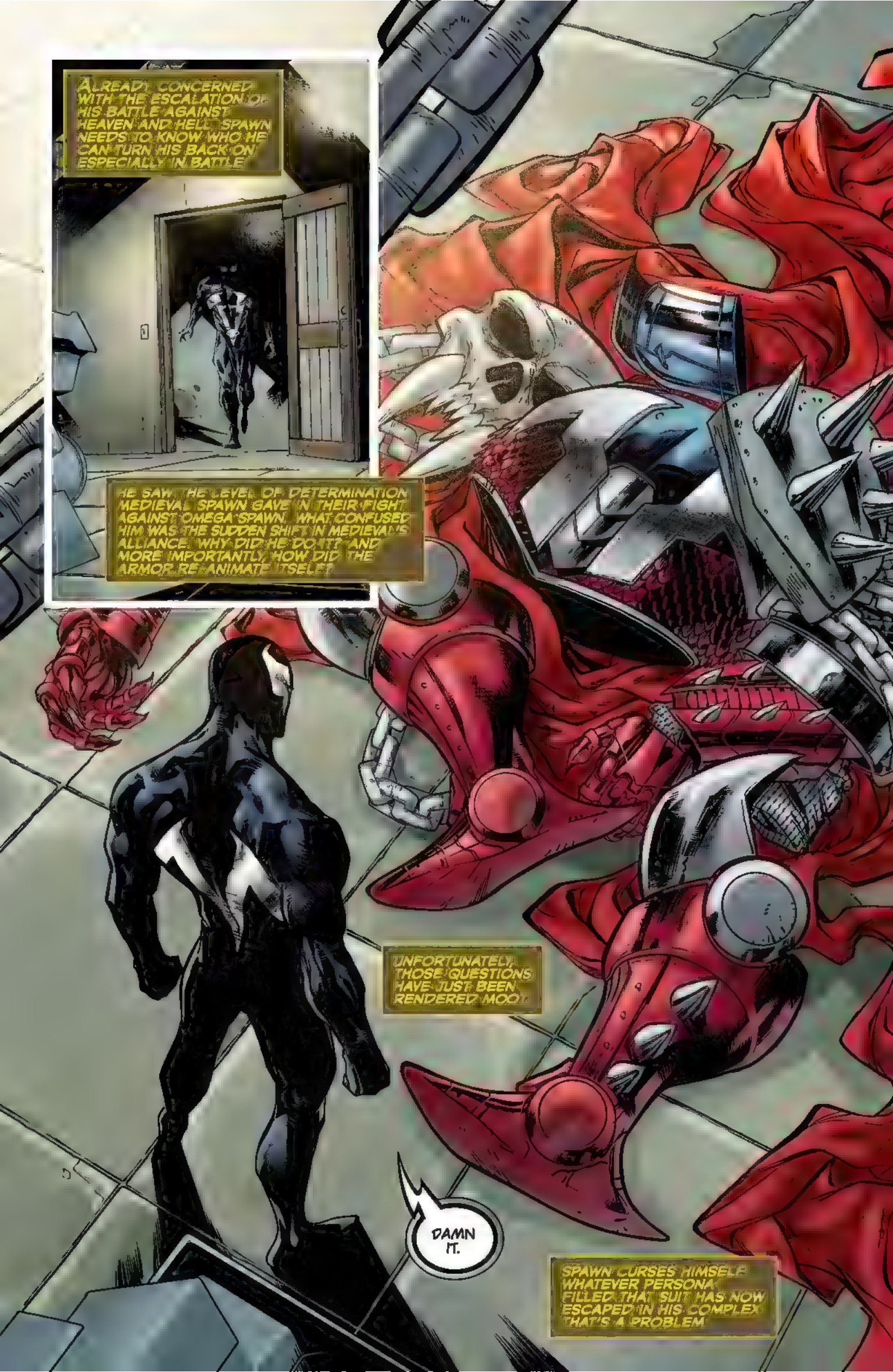
MAYBE HE'S OUTSIDE.
I ALREADY LOOKED.
WELL, I NEED HIM. WATCH MEDIEVAL FOR ME, I'M GOING TO GO FIND HIM.
WITH PLEASURE.
THIS IS ABSURD.
I'LL TELL YOU WHAT'S ABSURD...THAT SPAWN BROUGHT YOU HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
I SAVED HIM. HE WAS RETURNING THE FAVOR.
SEEMS ODD YOU'D WANT TO SKEWER HIM THEN WITH YOUR SWORD. OR DID I MISINTERPRET SOMETHING?
YOU ARE QUITE A MAGNIFICENT CREATURE.
WISH I COULD SAY THE SAME. IN THE MEAN-TIME, STOP WITH YOUR FRAT-BOY POSING. YOUR TYPE BORES ME.

They both go silent. Neither one willing to show the slightest sign of weakness.
You must be a new Hellspawn. Otherwise, you would sense I am not a threat to you.
What do you want?
The same thing you want: answers.
Go help Spawn find your friend. I won't move from this spot. You have my word on that.
Is that so?
Yes. And my humble apologies if I offended you with my prior language.

SHE GIVES HIM NO INDICATION WHAT SHE'S THINKING.
TRUST YOUR INSTINCTS.
SHE DOES.
DON'T GO ANYWHERE. I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
MINUTES LATER.
ANY LUCK?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WHERE'S MEDIEVAL, YOU DIDN'T LEAVE HIM ALONE, DID YOU?
HE'S FINE, DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM.
FINE? HE TRIED TO KILL ME.
THEN HE SAVED YOU. SO, YOU'RE BOTH EVEN NOW. GET OVER IT! I'M MORE CONCERNED ABOUT MARC AND WHERE THE HELL HE WENT TO. IS IT POSSIBLE SOMEONE BREECHED THIS PLACE?
NO.

THEN WE SEARCH EVERY SQUARE INCH OF THIS PLACE.
WHAT? YOU THINK HE'S HIDING SOME-PLACE?
DON'T KNOW! LET'S JUST FIND HIM THEN YOU CAN PEPPER HIM WITH YOUR QUESTIONS.
EVENTUALLY, A LOUD NOISE CATCHES THEIR ATTENTION.
MARC?!
MY GOD, ARE YOU OKAY? WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, WHY'RE YOU SITTING HERE?
I... DON'T KNOW.
DO YOU NEED A DOCTOR?
NO. I'M FINE.
YOU SURE?
I THINK SO. SOMEHOW I WAS LOOKING AT MY LAPTOP, THEN...
THEN WHAT?
THEN I WAS HERE. I CAN'T REMEMBER WHY--OR HOW.

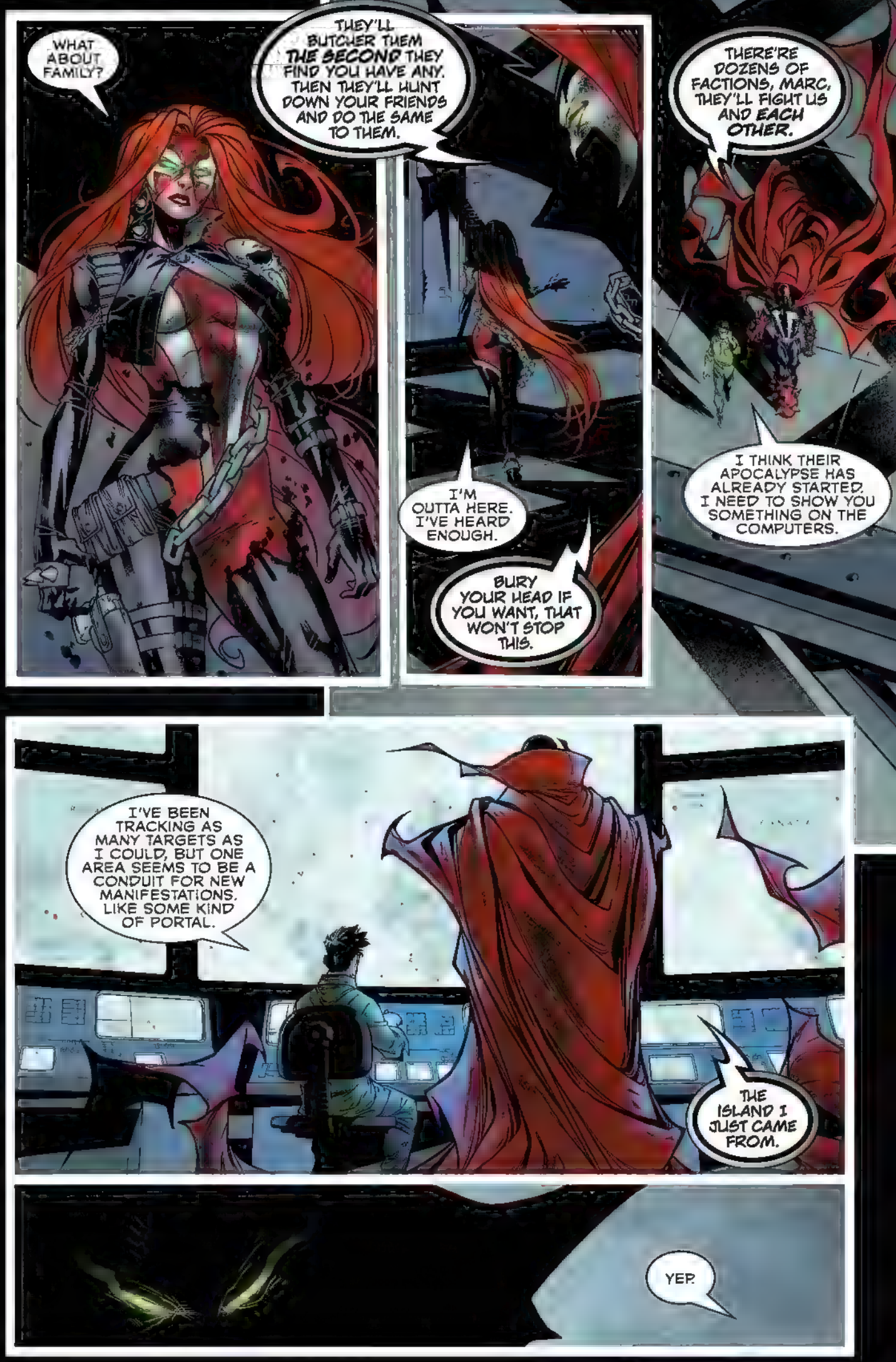
THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT, YOU NEED TO SIT DOWN, WE'LL FIGURE THIS OUT TOGETHER. CAN I GET YOU ANY-THING?
THE MAPS, I WAS GOING OVER THEM... SOMETHING SEEMED OFF.
IT DOESN'T MATTER.
WHY'RE YOU IN YOUR COSTUME? YOU GOING SOME-WHERE?
I JUST GOT BACK. MY BAD.
THIS BETTER?
WHAT'RE YOU DOING?
SHOWING SOME COMPASSION. YOU SHOULD TRY IT SOME-TIME.
MARC SAID HE'S FINE. AND IF YOU SAW WHAT WAS ON THAT ISLAND MEDIEVAL AND I WERE ON, YOU'D BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT OUR ENEMIES. YOU SEEM TO HAVE FORGOTTEN YOUR MILITARY TRAINING.
I'M GETTING TIRED OF YOUR LECTURES--I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING. SOMETHING HAPPENED TO MARC. I ACTUALLY GIVE A SHIT ABOUT THAT.
I'M GOING TO CHECK ON MEDIEVAL.
KNOCK YOURSELF OUT.
MARC, I FOUND YOUR GLASSES...WHY WERE THEY IN THE LAB?


ALREADY CONCERNED WITH THE ESCALATION OF HIS BATTLE AGAINST HEAVEN AND HELL, SPAWN NEEDS TO KNOW WHO HE CAN TURN HIS BACK ON, ESPECIALLY IN BATTLE.
HE SAW THE LEVEL OF DETERMINATION MEDIEVAL SPAWN GAVE IN THEIR FIGHT AGAINST OMEGA SPAWN. WHAT CONFUSED HIM WAS THE SUDDEN SHIFT IN MEDIEVAL'S ALLIANCE. WHY DID HE DO IT? AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, HOW DID THE ARMOR RE-ANIMATE ITSELF?
UNFORTUNATELY, THOSE QUESTIONS HAVE JUST BEEN RENDERED MOOT.
DAMN IT.
SPAWN CURSES HIMSELF. WHATEVER PERSONA FILLED THAT SUIT HAS NOW ESCAPED IN HIS COMPLEX. THAT'S A PROBLEM.

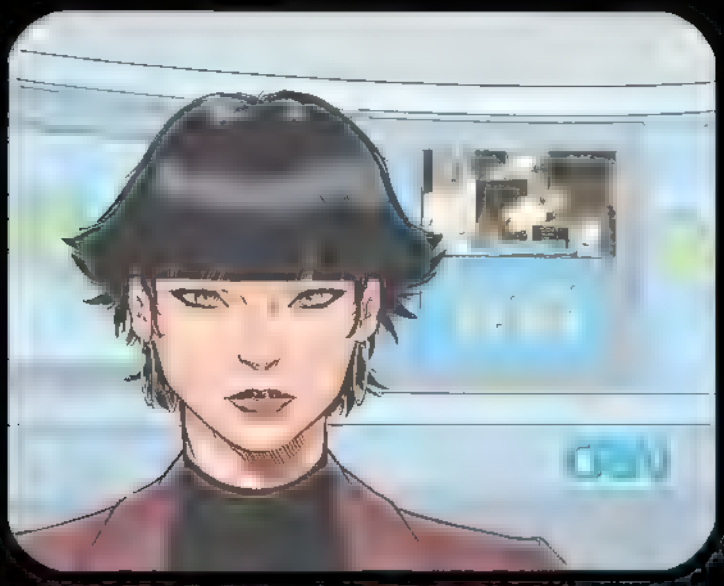
SOMEONE'S PLAYING GAMES.
AND HE'S IN NO MOOD TO PLAY BACK
OR MAYBE HE WOULDN'T, NOT IN HIS WEAKENED STATE, NOT WHILE HE'S AT A FRACTION OF HIS NORMAL POWERS. EITHER WAY HE NEEDS TO TAKE STOCK IN THE REST OF HIS COMPOUND
JESUS.
THE LAST TIME HE SAW CY-GOR HE WAS RESTING PEACEFULLY. WHO WOULD DO THIS TO HIM? WHO COULD GET SO CLOSE
BECAUSE VISITORS KEEP DISAPPEARING FROM HIS PLACE. FIRST IT WAS THE FREAK, THEN THE CURSE, BUT IF SOMEONE ACTUALLY ENTERED HIS BUILDING HE WOULD KNOW. HE WOULD 'FEEL' IT
TO BE ABLE TO TORTURE HIM?
Snap
POP
Snap
I'M TRYING, JESSICA, I... JUST DON'T REMEMBER. I'M SORRY.
I GET IT. BUT ANYTHING WOULD HELP. WHAT ABOUT THE TIME? YOU REMEMBER SEEING IT ON ANY OF THE COMPUTER SCREENS?
ELEVEN-THIRTY, MAYBE.
IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN YOU WERE BLACKED OUT OVER THREE HOURS.
AND SOMEWHERE IN THAT TIME YOU WENT TO THE LAB. OR SOMEONE DRAGGED YOU THERE. UNLESS THERE'S ANOTHER REASON YOUR GLASSES WERE ON THE FLOOR THERE?

Walt.
YOU'RE RIGHT, I DID GO INTO THE LAB.
TO DO WHAT?
I THINK I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING. SOMETHING CONNECTED TO WHAT I SAW ON THE BIG SCREEN, ONE OF THE TARGET MARKERS. IT WAS LIKE I NEEDED TO GRAB SOMETHING.
BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT.
NO.
COULD HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH SPAWN'S MISSION? WHERE HE TOOK OVERT-KILL.
IT'S POSSIBLE, BUT I DO REMEMBER THE DATA ON THE SCREEN WASN'T MATCHING UP TO THE ENERGY TRACKERS WE WERE FOLLOWING. LIKE NEW TARGETS WERE POPPING UP.
WHAT ABOUT MEDIEVAL? WHERE IS HE?
WHY'S CY-GOR HANGING LIKE A *PIECE OF MEAT?!*
I'M GETTING TIRED OF SHIT HAPPENING WHEN *I'M GONE.* THE FREAK. CURSE. THEY DISAPPEARED WHILE YOU WERE ON DUTY!
WHAT'RE YOU SAYING? THAT I'M HIDING YOUR MISFITS THEN SMASHING MY HEAD AGAINST A WALL, SO I FORGET IT ALL?
I WAS HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD AND MEDIEVAL APPEARS FROM NOWHERE IN THE ARMOR THAT WAS SITTING EMPTY WHEN I LEFT YOU WITH IT!
YOU NEED TO *TAKE* A DEEP BREATH, AL..!

YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU? THEY WANT US TO SLOW DOWN TO "TAKE A BREATH" SO THEY CAN KEEP ADVANCING THEIR AGENDA AND THEIR FORCES WHILE WE SIT ON OUR HANDS.
THE OTHER SIDE WILL DO ANYTHING...AND I MEAN ANYTHING TO ASSURE THEIR VICTORY AND YOU TWO SHOULD ALREADY KNOW THAT! THEY KILLED MARC'S GIRLFRIEND. THEY KILLED WANDA. AND THEY F*CKIN' KILLED NYX! THEY DON'T GIVE A SHIT, THEY'LL KILL EVERYONE YOU CARE ABOUT IF THEY HAVE TO, THEN THEY'LL DISGUISE THEMSELVES AS CHILDREN OR OLD LADIES, ANYTHING THAT'LL GAIN YOUR SYMPATHY...THEN THEY'LL KILL YOU THE SECOND YOU LET YOUR GUARD DOWN.
SO, YOU WANT TO TAKE A BREATHER? THEN DO IT AWAY FROM ME! BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING TO DIE BECAUSE OF YOUR STUPIDITY! IF WE HESITATE, IF WE JUDGE THEM BY THEIR LOOKS, THEY WIN. GAME OVER!
SO, WHAT'RE WE SUPPOSED TO DO?
DON'T TRUST YOUR EYES, BECAUSE YOU MAY HAVE TO SHOOT A 5-YEAR-OLD THROUGH THE SKULL SOMEDAY.
AND THE MOMENT WHEN YOU THINK THEY DON'T DESERVE THAT FATE, OR THEIR HUMAN FORM PLEADS WITH YOU TO SPARE THEM... THAT'S THE MOMENT YOU PUT TWO BULLETS IN THEIR HEAD. ASSUME ANYONE YOU TALK TO IS ONE OF THEM. TRUST NO ONE.
INCLUDING YOU?
YES. IF IT COMES TO THAT.


WHAT ABOUT FAMILY?
THEY'LL BUTCHER THEM THE SECOND THEY FIND YOU HAVE ANY. THEN THEY'LL HUNT DOWN YOUR FRIENDS AND DO THE SAME TO THEM.
I'M OUTTA HERE. I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.
BURY YOUR HEAD IF YOU WANT, THAT WON'T STOP THIS.
THERE'RE DOZENS OF FACTIONS, MARC, THEY'LL FIGHT US AND EACH OTHER.
I THINK THEIR APOCALYPSE HAS ALREADY STARTED. I NEED TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING ON THE COMPUTERS.
I'VE BEEN TRACKING AS MANY TARGETS AS I COULD, BUT ONE AREA SEEMS TO BE A CONDUIT FOR NEW MANIFESTATIONS. LIKE SOME KIND OF PORTAL.
THE ISLAND I JUST CAME FROM.
YEP.

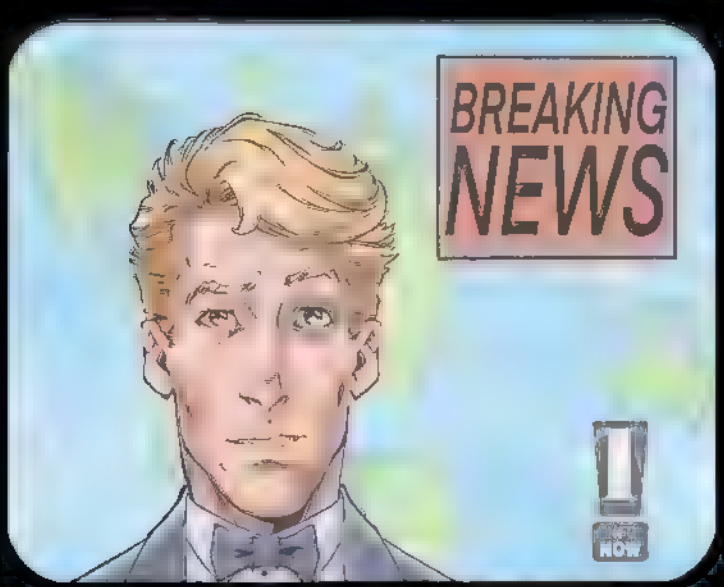
THERE HAS TO BE A HOLE, SOME DIMENSIONAL HOLE THEY'RE EXPLOITING.
I THINK THAT'S WHAT I WAS LOOKING AT WHEN I BLACKED OUT. TARGETS KEEP DISAPPEARING THEN RE-APPEARING.
BUT THEY'RE NOT THE SAME ONES EACH TIME, ARE THEY?
NO. NOT AS FAR AS I CAN TELL.
THEY MUST KNOW WE'RE TRACKING THEM. MAYBE THAT'S WHY YOU BLACKED OUT, THEY'RE EXERTING THEIR POWERS, TRYING TO INVADE MY HEADQUARTERS. THOUGH THAT DOESN'T EXPLAIN THE PRESENCE OF MEDIEVAL.
MARC, IT'S TIME YOU AND JESSICA THOUGHT ABOUT LEAVING THIS PLACE. I NEED TO CORROBORATE SOME OF MY SUSPICIONS.
HE STEPS BACK INTO THE SHADOWS
REAPPEARING THOUSANDS OF MILES AWAY IN BERLIN



WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM DOZENS OF NATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE. THEY CONTINUE TO BE HIT WITH AFTERSHOCKS FROM THE EARTHQUAKES THEY'VE EXPERIENCED. BUT, AS OUR REPORTERS HAVE TOLD YOU, THE AMOUNT OF DAMAGE, THANKFULLY, FAR EXCEEDS THE NUMBER OF LIVES LOST, AT LEAST TO THIS POINT.

A TOTAL OF 58 DEATHS HAVE BEEN VERIFIED FROM ALL KNOWN QUAKE AREAS. THIS IS FEWER THAN THREE PEOPLE PER EPICENTER. FALLEN BUILDINGS AND CRACKED ROADS SEEM TO BE CREATING THE MOST DIFFICULTIES IN THE URBAN AREAS, WHILE RURAL AREAS ARE FACING SHORTAGES OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES. WE WILL BRING YOU ANY UPDATES AS THEY COME IN.

BUT WE NOW SHIFT OUR ATTENTION TO ANOTHER SET OF REPORTS. FIRES, EXPLOSIONS AND GUNFIRE ARE INCREASING THE SENSE OF PANIC IN SOME REMOTE AREAS, BOTH HERE IN THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY. A FEW EYEWITNESSES SAID THEY SAW FLASHES OF WHAT APPEARED TO BE A RED CAPE AT SOME OF THESE COMPLEXES...



SOME ARE SPECULATING THAT THE MYSTERIOUS CAPE BELONGS TO THE MAN WHO HAS RECENTLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF AS ***LT. COLONEL AL SIMMONS***, THOUGH ALL RECORDS INDICATE THE ACTUAL COLONEL SIMMONS DIED ***YEARS AGO*** IN THE LINE OF DUTY. ALL RECORDS OF THE EVENTS LEADING TO SIMMONS' DEATH HAVE THUS FAR BEEN KEPT AWAY FROM THE PUBLIC, THOUGH A FEW MEDIA OUTLETS HAVE FILED LAWSUITS, THROUGH THE ***FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT***, TO COMPEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS TO UNSEAL ANY OF HIS RECORDS.

NONE OF THIS, HOWEVER, EXPLAINS WHO THIS "NEW" AL SIMMONS IS, OR WHY HE MAY NOW BE INVOLVED IN WHAT APPEAR TO BE RANDOM ACTS OF SABOTAGE IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. GIVEN THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE VARIOUS COUNTRIES REPORTING HIS PRESENCE, THOUGH, IT'S ***IM-POSSIBLE*** TO BELIEVE THAT IT COULD BE THE SAME PERSON. A BETTER EXPLANATION IS THERE MAY NOW BE A ***GROUP*** OF INDIVIDUALS TAKING UP THE SAME CAUSE AS OUR ***MYSTERIOUS*** MR. SIMMONS.

THE REASON OUR GOVERNMENT DOESN'T WANT TO DIVULGE ***ANY INFORMATION*** ABOUT THE WELL-ESTABLISHED DISTANT-HISTORY DEATH OF COLONEL SIMMONS... AND A HANDFUL OF OTHER OFFICERS WHO DIED AROUND THE SAME TIME, OVER FIVE YEARS AGO... IS BECAUSE... ***AS USUAL***... THEY'RE... ***HIDING***... SOMETHING!

AND THERE'S ONLY ONE EXPLANATION THAT MAKES ANY SENSE. MY SOURCES TELL ME, WITHOUT HESITATION, THAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

CLONING!

FOR DECADES, WE'VE ALL HEARD WHISPERS ABOUT HOW CHINA AND RUSSIA HAVE BEEN TRYING TO PERFECT THE DUPLICATION OF ANY AND ALL ***D.N.A. FIBERS***... WELL, ***IT'S HERE!*** AND WE SHOULD ALL BE CONCERNED BECAUSE SOON THEY'LL BE USING IT TO KILL MOST OF US CONSERVATIVES AND REPLACE US WITH CLONES OF OURSELVES SO THEY CAN CONTROL HOW WE ***VOTE!***

OBVIOUSLY, ALL THE EARTHQUAKES HAPPENING ALL AROUND US ARE NOTHING BUT A ***CONCEN-TRATED EFFORT*** BY A ***MULTI-NATIONAL CABAL*** TO SEE IF THEY CAN ALSO 'CLONE' EARTHQUAKES. WE'RE UNDER GLOBAL ATTACK!!! EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US!

0:3:1:3

"INFO SPAWN: HE'S THE ONE WHO HOLDS THE KEY TO EVERYONE TRAPPED HERE IS IN A RACE TO FIND SPAWN. THEN TORTURE HIM UNTIL HE TELLS THEM HOW TO REACTIVATE ONE OF THE "DEAD ZONES".

THE PERSON THEY CLAIM TO BE LOOKING FOR, LOCKING THEM ALL ON EARTH WITH NO WAY FOR ANY OF THE FACTIONS TO LEAVE IS SPAWN. NOW CAN THEY GRAB THE EMPTY THRONE-IF NONE OF THEM SAN GET TO HELL. THERE'S ONLY ONE ANSWER.

SO A MASSIVE SCRUM HAS BEGUN TO PLAY OUT ON EARTH-AS-ALL THE SHADOW PLAYERS ATTEMPT TO FIND AND SNATCH IN THE NOW LOCKED DEAD ZONES SCATTERED ACROSS THE GLOBE.

"FOR WHOEVER SITS UPON THAT THRONE CONTROLS ALL THOSE BORN OR ORDAINED TO HELL. THAT'S ENOUGH HELLISH FORCES TO BRING BOTH HEAVEN AND EARTH TO THEIR KNEES.

AND WHAT HE SEEKS IS EXACTLY THE SAME THING ALL THE OTHERS CRAVE.

POWER!

ENOUGH TO DOMINATE OVER EVERY ONE OF YOUR ENEMIES. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THE SOURCE OF THAT POWER RESIDES IN HELL IN THE FORM OF THE EMPTY THRONE. LONG SINCE LEFT EMPTY BY THE SLAYING OF THEIR PAST MASTER MALEBOLGIA.

A MILITIA GROUP KNOWN FOR ITS BRUTAL AND COVERT INVASIONS UPON ANY FACTION STANDING IN THE WAY OF THEIR MASTER'S GOALS.

ACTIONS THESE SHADOW TERRORISTS CALL THEIR ENEMIES, HEAVEN AND HUMANS, THEIR CURRENT LEADER IS THE ONE CALLED "LUCIFER".

THE WHOLE WORLD IS NOW BEING ATTACKED-ONLY PLACES KNOWN TO SPAWN AS ENEMY-STRONGHOLDS LIKE TERRITORIAL HIDEOUTS LIKE THIS ONE FOR A MULTIFACETED TERRAIN OF WARFARE.

WHAT ALL OF THEM ARE
SOON TO FIND OUT IS THAT
SPAWN IS SEARCHING FOR
ANSWERS TOO AND HE'LL
CIRCLE THE GLOBE TEN
TIMES OVER TO FIND A
WAY TO STOP ALL THE
INSANITY HE'S UNLEASHED
BECAUSE HE KNOWS IF ANY
OF THEM FIND A FLAW IN
HIS BARRICADES THAT
PERSON WILL NOT ONLY BE
ABLE TO HARNESS THE
POWER AND ENERGY OF
HELL BUT THEY WILL ALSO
BECOME ITS NEW KING!
SPAWN WILL DIE BEFORE
LETTING THAT HAPPEN, SO
HIS QUEST BEGINS BY GOING
TO AS MANY DARK CORNERS
OF THE WORLD AS HE NEEDS
HE WILL GET HIS ANSWERS!

FIND OUT MORE IN

SPAWN'S UNIVERSE

COMING JUNE 2021

PRESENTS:

THE BREAKDOWN

INTERVIEW WITH TODD McFARLANE

28 years ago, you brought Spawn to the world. There have been many mini-series, 1-Shots and spin-offs, why was this the right time to start a new Spawn Ongoing series?

Actually, I should have done something like this years ago. In fact, as far back as the first year of Image Comics formation, in 1992, the original founders all talked about possibly sharing our characters in some bigger playground. That never came to be, but I never stopped wanting to see some kind of universe put together. But as time passed and a couple of the original founders left Image Comics, it became apparent that all of us getting together wasn't going to happen. So, I tucked the idea away in the back of my brain talking about it off and on over the years. Then once I was nearing issue #300 of the SPAWN comic, I thought it might make a perfect catalyst to actually put something together. So, this is what I am calling the Spawn Universe (which will get a name change down the line so it will be a more encompassing of a brand not centered exclusively around Spawn-type characters).

There have been some teasers out already about the 3 new Ongoing titles. Can you give a sneak peek at what fans might expect?

Sure. Beginning in June (with the release of **SPAWN'S UNIVERSE #1**), I will introduce readers to three new monthly titles. The first (coming in August), is titled **KING SPAWN** and will be a companion book to the original Spawn comic, meaning you can get your Spawn fix twice a month. Then in October, the fans will get a pretty red-hot character in a book called **GUNSLINGER SPAWN** #1. For those not familiar with this guy, I keep saying that I think he can be my 'breakout' character from this new universe launch. The stories will tell tales both about the modern and the western Gunslinger character. Lastly, in December, will come a new super-hero team book called **THE SCORCHED** (since they've all been burnt at some point in their lives). This group will begin with a bunch of characters already in existence, but my plan is to rotate the team roster so that readers will get to see a wide array of heroes and villains.

Issue 1 cover by **TODD McFARLANE**

In an industry filled with re-boots and re-launches of titles and characters, why do you think that Spawn has stood the test of time?

That's a good question! To tell you the truth, I'm just as surprised as everyone else at his longevity and success. Back in 1992 when Image Comics was first launched, I knew that the first few issues

of my new SPAWN title would sell well as I was just coming off of my run on the Spider-Man title at Marvel. But there was no way for me to be able to predict that after nearly 30 years, my character would still resonate with readers… or that I would still be at the helm of the book. Only Erik Larsen and Savage Dragon has had a more focused creator run for so long, since 1992. But I do think that Spawn's attitude and no-nonsense approach along with that big red cape have played a big part, too.

In the past few years, you have chosen to re-visit some classic characters from the series. One character in particular, Gunslinger Spawn has proven to be a huge fan favorite. Why do you think that is?

First off, he just looks cool. Comics are a visual medium (unlike novels) so the look of a character can play a huge part in why some readers respond to any hero or villain. Obviously, Gunslinger with his tall hat and bullet straps and his long trench coat, all give off a pretty tough guy vibe. Then add in that he is capable of defending himself with an assortment of guns and weapons and you have the making of a classic "loner" type character that many fans seem to be attracted to. And I think that his popularity is only going to grow bigger as readers see more pages about him and his past. And just wait until they get to see what Brett Booth and Kevin Keane are doing with him artistically. He has the potential to be a huge breakout character. That's why he will be getting his own monthly title soon (coming in October).

Issue 309 cover by **TODD McFARLANE**

Spawn's Universe cover by **J. SCOTT CAMPBELL**

What are you most excited about with the upcoming Spawn's Universe?

To just begin! Look, it's been nearly three decades since the introduction of SPAWN #1 when we launched Image Comics back in 1992, so this concept of growing it into something much, much bigger has been living inside me for quite a while. I just decided that it was time to actually put it in motion and stop thinking about it and just do it! So, whatever plans I may think I have sorted out… this is literally just the first few strides in a race that I see as a long marathon, meaning that however excited I am now at the start of all this, hopefully it will be nothing compared with what will come out of it in the next few years and the next few decades. The unknown can be a thrilling ride if you aren't scared of it.

Obviously, it is going to take dozens and dozens of wonderful creators to get me to the goal of being able to create a meaningful universe filled with characters that people care about, but like I said this is but the beginning and I know the biggest thrills will still be ahead of me.

Do you have a question for Todd about the upcoming Spawn's Universe? If so, e-mail it to us at: **spawninggground@mcfarlane.com**, and next month, we'll pick a few for Todd to answer!

VELVET
ROYAL CITY
LAZARUS
EAST OF WEST
I KILL GIANTS
THE WALKING DEAD
KING CITY
SEX CRIMINALS
KILL OR BE KILLED
CURSE WORDS
RATQUEENS
SPAWN
BLUE MONDAY
MONSTRESS
CHEW
NOWHERE MEN
HOWTOONS
SUNSTONE
DESCENDER
PAPER GIRLS
OCTOPUS PIE
TOKYO GHOST
BITCH PLANET
SAGA
WAYWARD
PLUTONA
REVIVAL
NAILBITER
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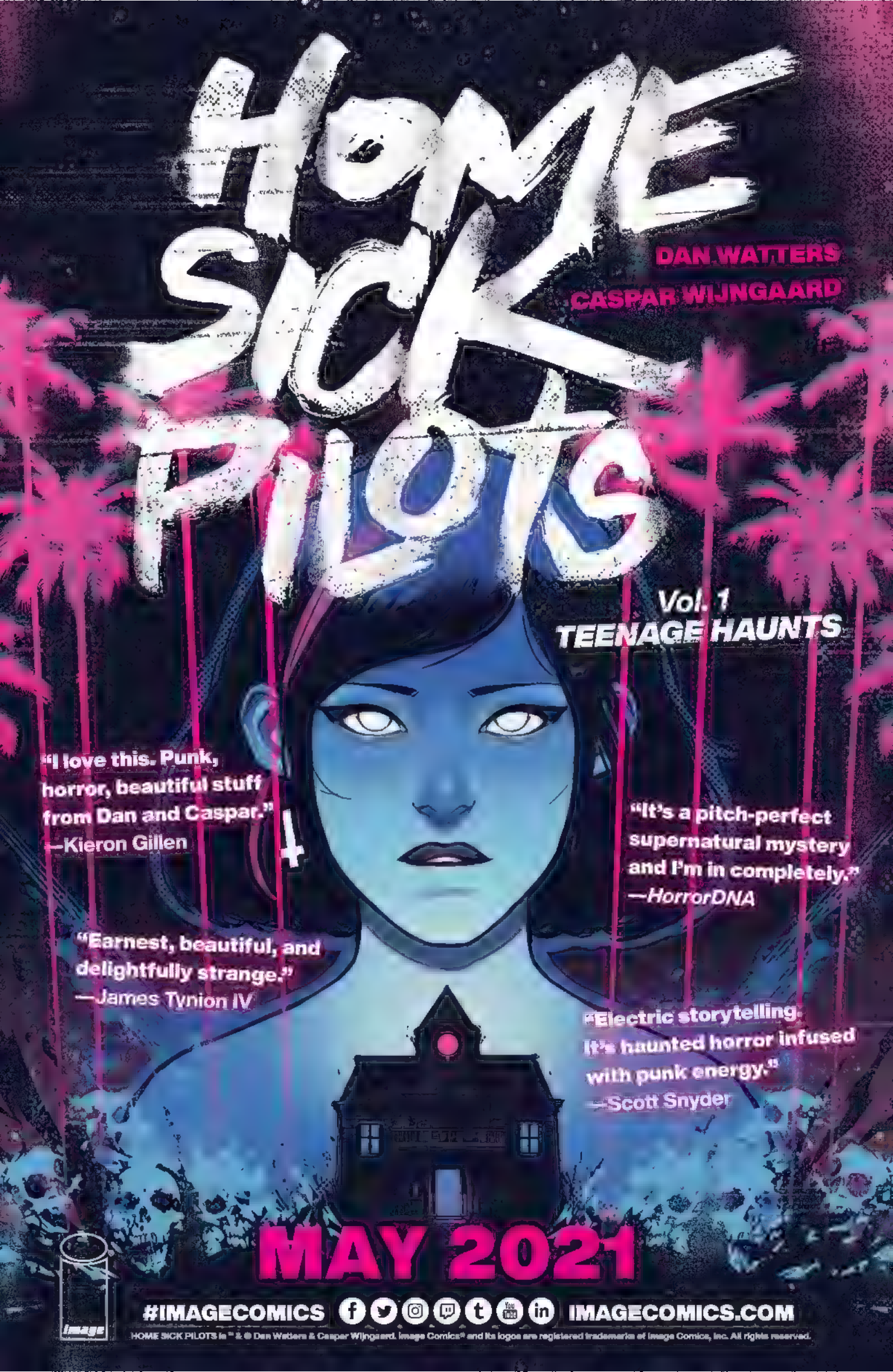
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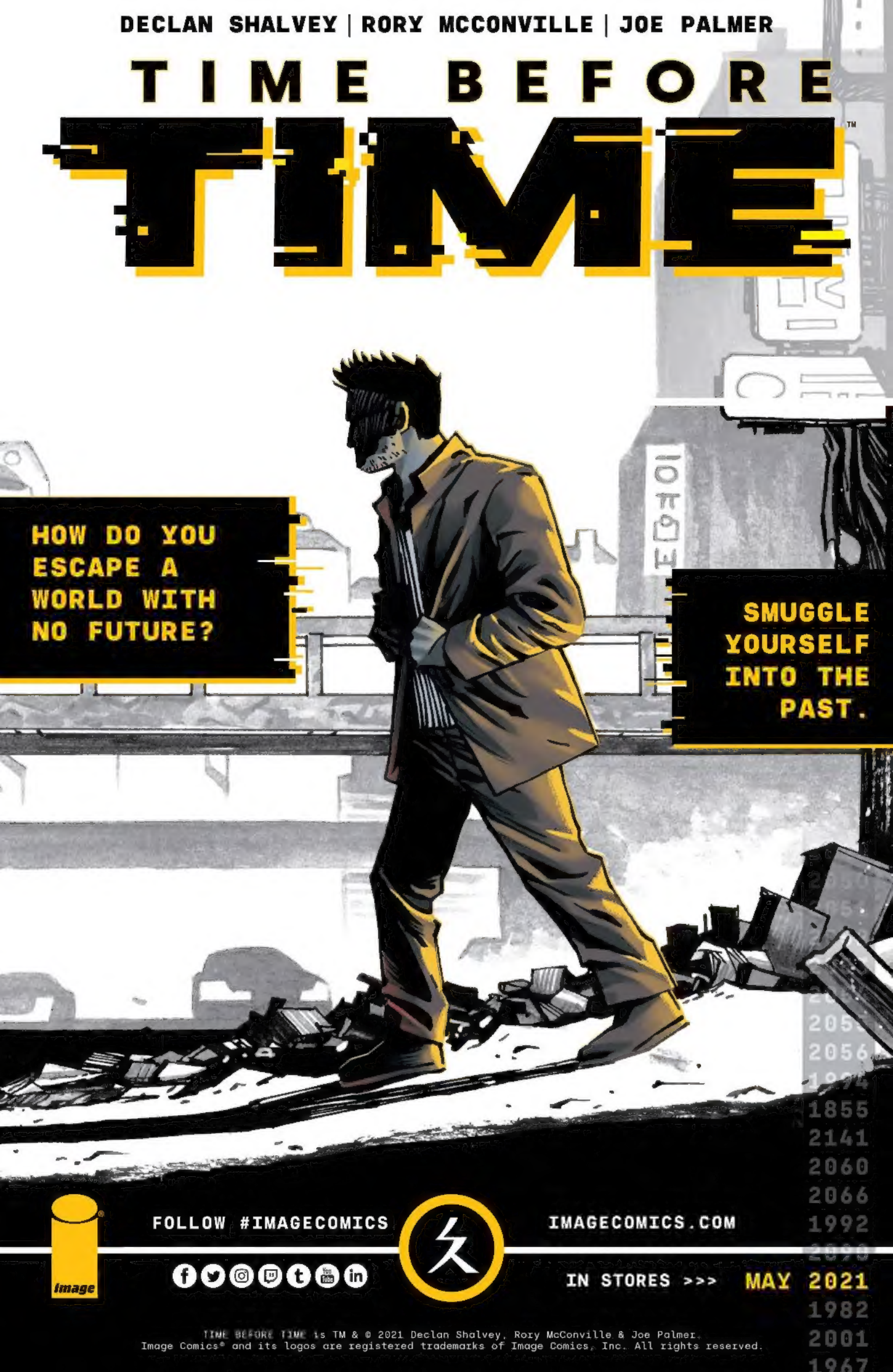

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